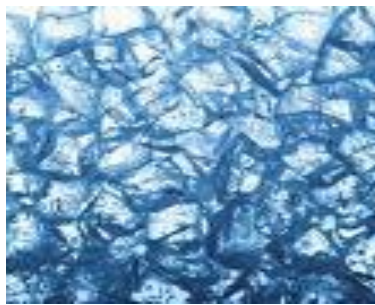


**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
HEALTH REGULATION AND LICENSING ADMINISTRATION**

## Fact Sheet: Ice as a Food

*Did You Know? That ice is one of the most neglected foods. People often forget that ice is a food by itself. Nearly all food establishments use ice, either from their own ice machines, or bagged ice. Remember that ice can become contaminated just as easily as other foods. The following are recommendations for keeping ice safe for human consumption.*



**FACT:** Scientific studies have shown that ice can be dirtier than toilet water.

**FACT:** Ice is only as clean as the source and its container.

### Recommendations

- Use ice only from an approved source safe for human consumption.
- Use ice scoops or tongs to remove ice. Store ice scoops or tongs in a sanitary location when not in use. Never use glass as a scoop and never scoop ice with your bare hands.
- Keep ice machines and ice bins clean. Ice machines accumulate mineral build-up which can harbor bacteria. Clean and sanitize frequently.
- When using ice buckets as food containers – always inspect containers for cleanliness before using, ice buckets should be inspected as food contact surfaces, and only a sanitized container should be used for ice. Remember, a container that has been used for anything else should never be used to hold ice, especially if the bucket once held any toxic substances.
- Treat ice bags as containers – clean the outside of the ice bags before opening, to keep ice safe for human consumption. Never break the ice by dropping the bag on the floor, the ice pieces will puncture the bag and allow the ice to become contaminated. Remember, to cover all ice storage containers when not in use, in order to prevent contamination.

For more information, please contact the  
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